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SOURCES AND USES OF SUFFERING.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."—II. COR. i., 3-5.

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."—II. COR. vii., 10.

There are not two kinds of sorrow, one of which is, in its own nature, malignant and deadly, while the other, in its own separable nature, is wholesome and spiritually nourishing. It is the same sorrow; but treated in one way it is deadly, while treated in another way it is wholesome. The one insoluble mystery of human life is the fact of universal suffering. For that there has never been a solution; nor does it appear as if there ever could be one. The reasons of it lie so far back, apparently, from any possibility of knowledge, that that constitution of the world which necessitates suffering must be among the insoluble mysteries which God shall reveal only when we are lifted up to a higher sphere of understanding. I know that it has been solved by saying that it is a violation of the law, and that it is meant to keep men within law; but that does not touch the question. How should men have been made and put into a situation in which the facility of violating law should have required a suffering tendency to stop them? As if a tendency that required suffering were not organic! And, therefore, why were men organically so made that suffering should be necessary, as

it were, to stop up the gap that sprang from the very necessity of their creation ?

It is said that suffering is the means of working out the greatest good upon the whole. Undoubtedly we may believe that, and gladly ; but that does not touch the question at all. Why was suffering made to be the means of working out the greatest good ? or, to put it in another shape, why should a system of creation and of moral government which is announced as centering on the principle of benevolence, whose sublimest illustration is that of the Divine Being himself suffering rather than that others should suffer—why should a creation that has that for its charter and center be so constructed that suffering should be a part of it ? Why should it be organically made so that suffering should be necessitated ? For what man has ever lived that has not suffered ? and what man will ever live that shall not be a sufferer ? No answer seems to me possible except that which Paul gave in a like emergency, and which was rather a mouth-stopper than an argument. There are a great many answers which shut a man up, but which do not explain nor answer. And so, when Paul was reasoning in the ninth chapter of Romans on the subject of discriminating power, or the elective and choosing power of God, he represented the objector as saying, “Why doth he yet find fault ? For who hath resisted his will ?” In other words, “If that was his creative purpose, who hath resisted him ?” Paul’s answer is, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor ?” Now the only fairness that there is in that answer (and that is perfectly fair and conclusive, and was the intended answer, and has been overlapped, and overlaid, and misconstrued by theologians)—the only fair thing in it is this : that there is one point at which all questions and all mysteries stop ; and that is at the inquiry, “Why did God make the world as he made it ?” That is a question which no man can answer. We do not know. That

is back of all possible reasoning. Being made and formed into organic unity, we have a perfect right to argue as to the tendencies of things and their relations to necessary causes; but when we go back of all that to the supreme question: When God made the constitution of the world, why did he make it so? the proper answer is, "Nay, O man, who art thou that questioneth God on this matter?"

A little child goes into his father's pottery and hears the buzzing of the wheel, and sees heaps of blue clay lying about. The father takes a wad of clay, and slaps it on the wheel, and turns the wheel, and forms the clay with his hands, and brings out a common earthen bowl. Then he sets that aside, and takes another wad of the same kind, and puts it on the wheel, and shapes it into a graceful urn of exquisite form; and the child says, "Father, why did you make one a dumpy, round bowl, and the other a long, slender, pretty pitcher?" "Well," the potter says, "because I had a mind to." Perhaps he cannot state why he did it. He might be able to, or he might not. And when you ask how God shapes things, like a potter, turning them out, as it were, on a wheel, there is this difference: that a potter can talk to his little child, but God does not talk to us. Therefore, when you are questioning God, and saying, "Why did you do it so and so?" You have gone beyond your depth, and your questions all come back upon yourself.

However, the sources of suffering and the uses of suffering may be sought. In the first place, I think we are accustomed to generalize too much, and to make declarations in respect to sufferings generically which are true of certain specific kinds, but which are not true of every kind of suffering. The moral character is different. For example, a man receives a constitutional tendency toward suffering by birthright. The sins of the father and of the mother go over and are visited upon the child, not in our narrow and technical sense of the word "sin," but in this sense: that certain habits, good or bad, certain tendencies, good or bad, are transmissible. Many a child is born into this world with malformations; and you cannot make a gymnast of such a child. You cannot make a full man of one who is born

without the average number of senses, or without the ordinary use of his limbs. He does not stand on a par with other men; and if a man is born in such a way that the heritable composition in him has a morbid structure, that man will suffer, not on account of any sin of his own, and not on account of any social liability, but simply on account of that great law which carries over from the ancestors to their posterity certain traits, good or bad. In other words, when it becomes well known, it is a vast motive for right living, and a plea against bad living, inasmuch as one and the other do not stop with you. He that disorganizes himself, he that corrupts his physical frame and his moral constitution, trails down through generations the mischiefs of such disorganization and corruption; and he who vigorously manhoods himself in body, in intellect, in moral feeling, is a benefactor to nations yet unborn, to races, to generations. The good and the bad which are stored up by a man's voluntary action become organic in him in such a sense that they are transmissible, and are a legacy, a heritage, to those who come after him.

"Who did sin," said the disciples to the Master, "this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents," said Christ; "but that the works of God should be made manifest."

This is a part of the original design of God. Therefore, we must take into consideration in any fair analysis of suffering the fact that a great deal of suffering in this world, in persons that have inherited a morbid estate, is not suffering that they are responsible for. They may be responsible for the use that they put it to, but not for the origin of it. I have noticed, in regard to suffering, that it lies in the nerve system—in the sensitive part of the system. Without a nerve there is no more feeling than there is in the shell of a tortoise. The muscles do not suffer except by the nerves that are imbedded in them; and the veins do not suffer except by the nerves that run along in them or near them. And there is a difference in the quality of the nervous system. Some persons are born into this world with a morbid nervous quality; and of all the incidents that fall upon

them the great majority make them suffer. On the other hand, there are persons born with such a wholesome and normal condition of the nervous system that the things which excruciate other people feed them and give them delight; and we are to make a distinction between persons who start with such disadvantages and persons who start with such advantages in life.

So, then, one great source of suffering in this world is the constructive difference of hereditary possession into which persons come when they are born.

Then there is a second great source—namely, voluntary, self-inflicted suffering, or that suffering which comes upon men by reason of actions of their own. And this includes a large amount of bodily suffering; as where, with or without knowledge, men of their own accord violate natural law and take the consequences.

It includes, also, a vast amount of social and moral suffering; as when men suffer from pride, from vanity, or from selfishness, by a wrong use of these qualities. There are many of the most acute sufferings in human life, which, if pride would go down and let men alone, would cease in a moment. There is a suffering of pride, there is a suffering of single faculties in the experience of men, which will throw a pall over the universe to them. They suffer because of the misuse of faculty, or because of the violation of external physical laws. The not-right using of the world outside, and the not-right using of the world inside, by a man, is what I call the cause of self-inflicted suffering. I need not say how countless are the elements of suffering that lie in this great source.

Then there is the third source of suffering—that which is inflicted upon us, other than that which is hereditary, first, by reason of our social connections. I think the most genuine and universal sufferings among rational and amiable people are those which spring upon them from their social liabilities. It is not safe for you to have a friend, because you double your liabilities to suffering; because you suffer for yourself, and you suffer for him if he suffers. By a *friend*, I do not mean a person who fans

you in summer by taking just as much wind, every time he waves the fan, toward himself as he wafts to you. I understand that man to be a friend who joins his being with yours, and all his intents and purposes with yours, so that whatever joy or sorrow you have becomes his in a measure. Therefore, a friend is one that stands by you in joy gladly, but even more earnestly in sorrow and trouble. A man that stands by me in joy and abandons me in trouble is a parasite, and not a friend. Therefore a man cannot afford to have too many friends if he does not mean to suffer. He cannot afford to marry and love a woman as if she were his chiefest and noblest self. He cannot afford to be a father of children, every one of whom is an explosive kingdom of suffering. He cannot make himself liable to the cares, the anxieties and the burdens of the household, where with bankruptcy comes suffering of one kind, and where misfortunes, crowding down hither and thither, scatter suffering of another kind, and where each child brings its little rivulet to pour into the parental stream of suffering. A man is so made that he takes not only joy and sorrow, but weeps with those that weep, and rejoices with those that rejoice. He takes part with all those who are around about him in his particular sphere, suffering by his sympathetic association with them. Of the sufferings that we go through in life, by far the largest number, and by far the noblest, as compared with any other source thus far mentioned, are the sufferings which we have in connection with other people. We rise with them; we go down with them; we mourn with them; we rejoice with them; and in this world, where so seldom it happens that all your friends are wise, and where you stand more or less affiliated with those who are imperfect in a thousand respects, and where you carry their burdens, bear them for them, as Christ bore our burdens, you render yourself liable to a great amount of suffering.

Then, besides, there are the sufferings which spring up on account of our civil organization. We are not simply members of the household; we are also members of the State. We belong to the kingdom, to the empire; and in the great play of the events of human life, that which happens to the

commonwealth has its dividends in each man's experience, and may have in the experience of multitudes of men.

Thus, in the great war, which like a summer tempest sped through our murky years, how many, many thousands and hundreds of thousands suffered exquisitely, without fault of their own, simply because they were joined to the commonwealth! When the commonwealth suffered, they suffered.

The commonwealth is the indispensable condition to that happiness which gives wealth and power, and augmentation of power, to each—that power which belongs to law, to institutions, and to potential government. It is every day pouring, unnoticed, innumerable blessings upon every citizen's head; but now and then every citizen has also to take his share, his dividend, if I may so say, of that suffering which offsets so much bounty and benefit. The sufferers in the great war were not those that bled on the battle-field. The drops of blood that fell on the hearthstone were more and bitterer than those that fell on the field of battle. Not he who haply was a martyr in the cause of his country, but they that lived to mourn, suffered most—by their social connection, not only, but by their civil relationship.

And so we have springing from all these sources the suffering which comes upon us by ancestral connections, by our self-inflicted violations of law, and by those things which are inflicted upon us by others, whether by accident, by social liability, or by civil estate.

Now, it is Christianity alone that grapples with this supreme element of human experience, and makes it a characteristic element of its system. You may burn up your Bibles, you may call in philosophers to show that they are absurd, you may have scientists to demonstrate that the historical elements here and there are all wrong; but I tell you that a Book which takes into account universal suffering, and throws upon it the light of the soul of God, to teach men how to triumph by it, through it, and in spite of it—I tell you that such a Book is not going to be lost out of the world. Give me a medicine for pain in the body that effectually cures all bodily pain, and let it be known through years and

years and years that, without harm, nay, that, enforcing the constitution and augmenting the strength, it has the power to extinguish pain; and you may bring every school of physicians from the highest to the lowest, and from the newest to the oldest, and they may analyze it and denounce it, and chemists may pronounce it void, and men, wise and foolish, may call it empirical, and may say that it is fancy, or whatever else they will—let me have that which, when taken, *does stop pain*, and all the schools in creation cannot prevent its distribution! Men want it, and they will have it.

So I say in regard to the New Testament especially—in regard to the Old Testament also, but more particularly in regard to the later revelations—that the reason why the words of Christ, and the interpretation of those words through his apostles, are destined to hold a controlling place through all time, is not that the church is going to take them up, is not that there is going to be an able priesthood or Christian ministry, but that in the New Testament, and in that alone of all religious Books, there is that which grapples with this fundamental mystery of human life. Other books give you, here and there, a maxim—a stoical maxim; they touch suffering in one point or another; but the New Testament looks it right in the face, and throws around it its arms, and takes it into its very heart and substance, and tells the world, not why it was created to suffer, but how suffering, as it were circulating in the blood of the human race, can be turned to the highest account, and make men joyful. That is what the New Testament does.

Now, to me, it is not a small thing that the New Testament teaches that Christ is God. Although I attempt, and will attempt to the end of my life, to persuade men to receive Christ by the heart as God, I am not one to say technically, or theologically, that a man has not the true idea of Christ because he does not believe he has a divine nature; I will show the utmost lenity and charity in receiving men into my fellowship and into communion with the saints of God where I believe the heart virtually does the work which the head ought to have done but failed to do; but in respect to my own personal faith, when I give up the thought that Christ

is very God I give up every thing. It is a part of my very spirit-being. I have no God except as I have seen him interpreted through the Lord Jesus Christ; and any reasoning or any theological system which takes the very godship of God out of my Lord and Saviour puts me where Mary was when she said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." It is this: the fact that Jesus, very God, came down from heaven into a world organically created to suffer, himself a sufferer and God; and when it is said, "The whole creation groans and travails in pain," it does not exclude Him who made creation, who humbled himself unto death, and who became a sufferer above every one that ever lived upon the face of the earth; and it is this: that Christianity bases itself on the sufferings of Christ, and out of considerations derived from his nature and character, and out of revelations opened by his work, teaches men how sufferings may be, not avoided—no, no; how sufferings may be, not healed—oh, no; how sufferings may be, not cast out—no: but kept in, *kept in*.

When the heavens are black with storms, and the sun is all hidden, how hideous are the rolling clouds! But when, moving on at last, the sun gets a fair stroke at them, what is there in castellated dwelling, in mountain or in field, or in all human experience, so magnificent as sun-lit clouds, of every color, gorgeous with every hue, and piled in every wondrous variation of form?

And so, when suffering falls upon the natural man without the light of Christ, and without the light of the other world upon it, how leaden, how dark it lowers; but when it is once lit up with all that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ and the opening of spiritual life beyond, how does it flash radiantly! And men that cower as the thunder rolls, and hide themselves from the storm as it passes them, see what it is, and thank God for such a storm; and in human life there have been a few, too few (many more there should be, and many more there will be), who, when sorrows came upon them, mixed, indiscriminate, uninterpreted, unknown, have sunk down under them; and yet, when a longer time had elapsed, and they had come to old age, looked on their sor-

rows, and what they had suffered, and said, "It was not joyous, but grievous; but really it has worked out in me the fruit of righteousness."

Now, there ought to be the spirit of interpretation, or of knowledge, among men, so that while they are going into suffering, while yet they are under its rain, and while its hail pelts them, they shall be enabled to say, "I rejoice." Let us look into that a little.

The use of sorrow, its capabilities for grandeur and for richness in men, is not to be lost sight of. That is the distinctive character of the New Testament. I say that while in the philosophy of Seneca and in the philosophy of the stoics generally you see many things that are admirable, and that might well be texts of the Bible, yet you do not see in any religion or philosophy a grappling with the whole fact of suffering in its varied relations. I do not see there any central principle by which suffering may become the greatest boon of humanity. In Christianity alone do you find that; and in the text of the 7th chapter of 2d Corinthians, tenth verse, it is declared that there are two ways in which suffering works. One is toward death, and the other is toward life. It may go either way.

Now, then, let us look into that element in Christianity and see what it is. It teaches us that sorrow is divine. Whatever may be the sources of it, there is in it a divine element.

"Blessed are they that mourn."

When our Master was about to send out his disciples he thought he would give them a pearl necklace; and it is extraordinary to see what kind of pearls he strung on that string which is called "the beatitudes" in Matthew. There never was such a necklace made before; and among the pearls, and one of the largest of them, is, "Blessed are they that mourn." Then, to be in a condition to mourn is to be in a condition of divine benediction. And when he had finished his necklace, and he wanted to have a glowing, magnificent clasp to it, that would set off everything else, he said, "Rejoice when men persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, spitefully, for my sake." In other words,

the men that are accounted the unfortunates of life ; the men that society kicks out ; the men that all good and nice people despise ; the men that have lost name and place and power ; the men that are crowded, as the apostles were, till they said that they were treated as if they were the slough, the washings, the off-scourings of the world—to all such men Christ says, “ Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.” Was there ever such a ridicule of human life, as to tell men, under such circumstances, “ This is the time to be happy ” ? And yet, there was never anything deeper and truer.

The sorrow unto death—let us look a moment at that. What is it ? Anything that tends to make sorrow strengthen the animal nature that is in you, the lower faculties that are in you, makes sorrow work toward death. He who selfishly avoids all sorrow is working toward the animal ; but there are a great many men who do it without any hesitation. I do not mean who do it grossly : I mean what are called “ snug men ”—men that have their senses about them ; men that, when they go into a place, are not going to give way to generosity ; men that look around and see where the church is that has the most respectable people in it ; men that are not going to take any prominent position, but that are going in just enough to get whatever advantage there is in association ; men that, when questions come up in the community, are not going to discuss them, because it might bring them into unpopularity ; men that are not going to form connections in this, that, or the other way ; men that, since it entails a great deal of trouble and responsibility, are not going to get married, but are going to live single ; men that are not going to take upon themselves care or trouble of any sort. These men have only just the thought that a needle has—how to go through cloth smoothly, and not catch ; and they are worth just about as much as a needle—sharp at one end, blunt at the other, and cold all the way through. They are men that are all the time thinking, “ How shall I dodge sufferings ? How shall I put myself in such relations to men that I shall not have any of their burdens and responsibilities and cares ? ” They are men that say, “ I mean to keep myself smooth, and pretty, and vel-

vety, and happy—that is what I am going to do.” What sort of a man is it that says that? What do you think of such a man—even if it is yourself? There is many a man that, if he could think himself to be his neighbor, and then look at him, would despise him. The men that are avoiding all suffering by sacrificing every generous instinct, by sacrificing every element of magnanimity, by sneaking through the by-ways of life; the men that roll themselves up in leaves as many rose-slugs do; the men that are so afraid of suffering that they are content to be immaculate negatives in life—what sort of men are they? That dread of suffering, that avoidance of suffering, it is, that works death and damnation.

There is many a man that scoffs and turns up his nose at the poor reeling wretch of the gutter; and yet I would rather take a drunkard’s chance before God than that of these smooth impeccable specimens or icicles of humanity; for there is many a poor drunkard that has been carried down by the warmth of his heart because it was so much easier for him to trust and lean upon men. It is wicked, it is awful, for a man, under any considerations, to destroy mind and body and soul together: nevertheless, there is many a respectable man who is worse than a drunkard. The drunkard has corrupted himself; but the other has saved himself; and he that saveth his life in that way shall lose it.

Where men refuse all education of their higher nature; where they, in other words, refuse to let suffering work the subsidence of the animal instinct, and the elevation of the moral element, their use of suffering and trouble is unto death. There is many a man who never humbles himself under suffering. He undertakes to ward it off. What he should do, often, is to yield up that thing which makes him suffer. The suffering springs from a corrupt, wrong tendency in him. He refuses it; and it perverts him, hardens his heart, bakes it, as crockery is baked in the potter’s furnace. Where suffering works toward the full education of the lower nature; where it makes men selfish, quarrelsome, bitter, envious, full of complaints against God and man, cowardly, despairing, there preëminently it works

toward death. There are many men who destroy themselves in suffering by suffering, because it seems to take out of them all their manhood, and to reduce them to the range of the lower animals.

The most piteous thing in the world in sickness, I think, is the want of tone that it brings with it. It is a very pitiful thing to hear a man of great, strong, rough voice piping and asking you to "shut that window." Well, that is mere physical weakness; but still it falls painfully upon your ear. Though he is not responsible for it, you see how painful it is. You cannot bear to see a man whom you have looked up to, and the light of whose understanding and genius has radiated your path, chirping out of his chair, not worth much more than a cricket in the corner. This is the physical feebleness that comes over men; and yet you cannot help feeling that it is painful.

I cannot bear to go to sick chambers very much on that account—and yet, I can bear anything. I can go when it is my duty; but no man can interpret into language the pitifulness of pain which one suffers when father and mother grow so old that age hides what they were from you, so that they come to be children again.

That is one reason why I do not want to be an old man. I hope God will have so much consideration for my weakness—if it be a weakness—as to let me drop down in my harness, and in the full energy of work. I have no fear, whatever, of dying: it is only the fear of living that I have before my eyes.

My venerable father, who was a second David in his time, a man of war, and yet who had as sweet a heart as ever an angel woman had, lived through many last years of weakness and obscurity; and I had to remember a great way back to find my father. It was very pitiful, very painful. It was not his fault; but there is the fact.

Now, if things for which men are not responsible are, nevertheless, when looked at, so painful that you have to fight with the sense of deterioration, if not degradation, how much more painful is it when you see a man who has no such excuse or reason overcrowded by trouble?

Here is a man in the middle of life ; and what has befallen him ? He had been scraping and scraping and scraping in the dirt, and had dug out gold particles until he had a large pile, a little pyramid, of gold ; but one day a thief, bankruptcy, revulsion, commercial reaction, hit it a lick, and away went the whole of it ; and here goes our wounded soldier limping off from the battle-field ! It is as if a soldier had a ball in battle take a little bit of skin off from his hand, and he cried, “ Oh ! oh ! oh ! carry me to the hospital.” You would despise such a soldier ; but you are all soldiers in the battle of life. You can overcome, if you will, the troubles that overtake you in this world ; but there are multitudes of men who are driven out of courage and constancy and usefulness by things that ought to make them ashamed in the telling.

Do you suppose you require a mirror ten feet high and four feet wide in your parlor ? Do not you suppose that you could sit on a wooden-bottomed chair, and dispense with a chair with a plush bottom ? Do you not think you could get along if you had no piano and no girls to drum on it ? Do not you think you could stand it if you had not wheat bread ? Is there not something in you that does not require the blandishments and the favors of life ? Is there no source of pleasure in yourself without these things ? Have them if you can, but keep your manhood ; and when, in the providence of God, they are taken from you, when you are stripped down and down, let it be with you as it is with the ear of corn. When one husk is taken off, and another, and another, by and by you come down to the corn. That is all ; and that is the best of the whole. It is what the whole thing was made for.

Men, in the troubles of life, in the adversities of life—how they sneak ! How they deliquesce and run down ! And how poor, how mean, is manhood that has not in it sublime faith ! The man that is born of the earth, and remembers only that father, and does not remember that he was born of God, but forgets that Father—what sort of manhood has he ? and how right straight down on the broad road of death, murderous death, is such sorrow as his !

When a man has sorrow that touches the body and the affections, for a moment the shock may be allowed to unman him; there is great expansibility in nature, and God is expansible in his sympathy, and Christ wept, and there is a charter for every one that sheds tears in due measure; but just beyond the tear was the resurrection, and Christ knew it, and yet wept; and so men may weep under suffering. I would not hold them up to a stoical rigidity; but this I say: No man should allow himself to be ground out of his manhood by any suffering of the body or the affections, nor by any suffering in life, come what may.

Then comes the sorrow that works toward life; and in this there are four stages which I shall mention. Where sorrow works reformation, patience, endurance, and fortitude, it is unto life.

The civil engineer takes a stick of oak, a stick of ash, a stick of pine, a stick of spruce, a stick of maple, a stick of beech, and a stick of every other kind of timber, and he has a graded screw, or a succession of weights, and he brings, by pressure, it may be of the screw, or it may be of the weights, each stick of timber to the breaking point or the crushing point, and he finds that the strength of these sticks of timber varies all the way through a wide scale.

And it is so with men. They are not alike. Some men break easy, and some break very hard indeed.

Now, when suffering comes upon men who are involved in wrong (as suffering comes from wrong), the question is, How much suffering will they endure before they will stop the wrong, or reform, or be converted and turn from the wrong?

A man finds that his drinking habits are bringing him and his wife and children to desolation and misery; and if he, being made to suffer, buries his suffering in the cup, it is suffering unto death; but if the suffering says to him, "Stop! stop!" and he says, "I will stop; with what little remains to me of manhood I will cut off the source of this derangement," then his suffering is working in the right direction. But that source of derangement being cut off, down goes his spirit in a moment: that is, he is in a de-

pressed condition ; and he says, "I have lost my character, my business and my place, and I cannot get them back again. Now that I want to reform, nobody wants me ; and wherever I go, I am met coldly and repulsed. Just when I should think God would send me relief, just when I need it to enable me to be a better man, then it seems as though all God's thunders rolled over my head, and all his troubles came upon me." But he says, "Nevertheless, I will not give up." And then comes the balm, the sweet words of that blessed disinterested love, a woman's love, the love of a wife for a fallen husband, than which there is nothing more pitiable, and nothing diviner, this side of the throne of God. She whose heart has been like a macadamized road, tramped over by his infernal hoofs—she is the only one who in the stress of his anguish and in the depth of his troubles soothes and quiets and cheers him, and holds him steadfast, till with some rays of hope, and with faint steps, he begins to turn back. Oh ! let the star rise early in the morning with blessing, let the star linger late, that sends God's kind thoughts to such an one as helps deliver another from the thrall of bitterness and the bondage of death. Sorrow works repentance, and he is saved. Little by little, he grows again ; and as the tree heals its gashes, so his life gradually throws out new wood and bark over the old sores and wounds ; and where sorrow is blessed to the reformation of a man, making him patient, and giving him courage and fortitude, that is one effect of sorrow which works toward life and toward salvation.

Then look at sorrow where it works out the deliverance of our manhood from earthly trouble. As I have said, all trouble is not from the violation of natural law : it is the misuse of our own selves ; as where a man, for instance, determines that his happiness shall flow out from money, and he is balked in the acquisition of money, and he insists that he will be happy through the instrumentality of money or nothing. The cure of that in a man is to teach him to be happy in something else besides the possession of money.

Many a man means to be happy by having political influence ; and he is tripped up ; he is slid down and out of the

way; and he mourns; and his life is bankrupt to him, and all that sort of thing. Now teach him that the thing for which he was living was not worthy of him, and that there are other and better sources of happiness, and you have healed the sorrow in him. When sorrow so works as to broaden our life, as to bring down our offending faculties into their proper position, as to make us take anew our bearings and carry ourselves as sons of God destined to immortality should do, then it works toward salvation and toward life.

Now, we go one step higher; and now we are coming to the heroism of suffering, where our sorrow has been felt, where we have turned it to good account, and where we say in ourselves, "I thank God that I have suffered. I never had such a pity for people as I have now; I never had such a sense of the weakness of people as I have now; I never knew that people needed compassion so much as I do now; I never felt so drawn to men as I have since I have suffered. I glory in suffering. I have learned how to comfort other men with the comforts by which God has comforted me. I have been studying human nature; I have seen it in its prosperous condition; I have been prospered; and I did not know what a great under-class of unfortunate men there are in all manner of distress, till God plunged me down among them, and then drew me out, and comforted me, and strengthened me, and gave me the victory; and shall I, that, like my Master, have been taught so much by suffering, see so many men about me that need the consolation with which I have been consoled, and not glory that, at last, I have a text from which I can preach to a class that seldom hear sermons?"

Every man has by experience learned a language in which he can talk to men and be understood. It is the language of sorrow and despondency and heart-brokenness. It is the language of guilt. It is the language of fear. And the sermons are not theological sermons. They are sermons that come from the heart of the speaker, and that are on a level with the understanding of those who are round about him. When a man feels, "I have been made wise by mistakes, I have been made a sufferer by them, and so have been fitted to help other sufferers;" when a man feels, "I have been

made tender, and my pride has been humbled by suffering, and I am qualified now to take hold of those who are lowly and outcast and are in trouble, and I thank God for a ministry of suffering," then he has found the secret of happiness. So when Paul gave utterance to that rejoicing chorus, "I count it all joy when I fall into trials; I rejoice in my afflictions and infirmities," that language seems strange to men who do not know the meaning of it; but it is a wondrous language. It is not a language of this world. It is divine.

You recollect the story (I wish I could call his name), of a young physician who, when men were perishing by plague, and all medical skill was baffled, deliberately arranged all his affairs, and, though he had a brilliant prospect of life before him, went and took care of the plague-stricken patients, shutting himself up with them, and exposing himself as nobody else would. At last he was seized by all the symptoms of the plague, and with his watch and journal he marked down, hour by hour, the progress of the disease, telling how it affected his head and heart and lungs, and what was every development of it, clear down to the point at which he could no longer hold his pen, and died. He did this that he might leave, through his suffering, that knowledge which would cure and save the lives of myriads of men. Do you understand that? Do you see how he could do it? Yes, I hope there are still ingenuous young natures, not yet hardened by selfishness nor seared by worldly experience, that can feel some rebound at that heroism by which a man would deliberately take on suffering in this life in order that he might bless his whole race.

Do you remember that other story of a man who all his life long was laying up, laying up money, watching against waste, and living in the humblest ways, and was considered a miser, and was pointed out and jeered at by the boys, and taunted and flouted in the city? But he was not a miser. He had an end in view. The poor of the city were accustomed, from the slender resources of water there, to suffer great extremity; and he saw it; and he labored through his whole life to amass money, that he might build an aqueduct, and bring the water from the near hills to the city; and

when he died, the treasure that he had accumulated was used for this purpose. Thousands of the poor and helpless inhabitants in the city suffered from thirst; and this man suffered poverty and abuse in order to amass property that his fellow-citizens—the infirm and poor—might be relieved; and he joyed as he went on, thinking what a blessing, by his suffering, would spring up in rivers of living water.

Is there not an education in these examples of suffering for men which is worthy of the consideration of every man?

Look away from yourself. Ponder not what your bones and flesh do suffer. Think not what your calamities are. Do not selfishly calculate how they will affect you here or there. Rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer, that by the consolation with which you are comforted you may console those that are suffering in calamity.

Now, there comes one step beyond that—a step which in some hours some men may take—namely, the fellowship of suffering with Christ. In that matchless letter of Paul to the Philippians, 3d chapter and 10th verse, he says,

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”

Now, we all rejoice to be made conformable to the throne, and to the crown, and to the smiling and rejoicing; but how many of us have a secret heroic joy in thinking that we are joined to Christ in the sufferings of this world? not in sickness; not in any lower physical aspect, but in his higher relations? That, as the universe, which groans and travails in pain until now, is to be delivered by the great Saviour through the merit of his own suffering, and through the instrumentality of his own endurance, so we become like him when we rise into such fullness of sympathy with him that we are declared to be Christ's companions; that inasmuch as we are coming to understand what were his sufferings, and to suffer as he did, in some sense our life is given, like his, for the world, our hearts are pierced, like his, that other hearts may not bleed, our tears fall, like his, that others may not shed tears, and we are cast out that others may not be cast out; that we may do these things in order

that we may "give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater"—this is the highest reach of suffering.

I commend you, not to a few trite maxims; I commend you, not to a knowledge of how to dodge suffering, or how, with a few stoical notions, to endure suffering—they are unworthy of you: I commend to you the true theory of suffering as men. I commend to you the knowledge of how to manage suffering so that when you have gone wrong it shall bring you right. So manage it, if it comes upon you, that it shall make you richer in the upper part, and poorer in the lower part of your nature. So manage it that it shall make you a benefactor of the great throng of sufferers that are round about you. So manage it that it shall bring you into sympathy and personal alliance with God. So manage it that you shall rejoice that you are made conformable unto his death and his sufferings.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

How easy thou hast made it for us to come near to thee, thou that hast made the day, and the sunlight, and all that is blossoming and fair upon the earth; thou from whom cometh forth whatsoever greets the eye with joy and with pleasure; thou that dost own the cattle on a thousand hills, and all gifts and treasures; thou who hast stamped thyself upon all the works of creation; nay, thou who hast taught us, looking upon the bird, upon the flower, upon the sky, upon morning and evening, and upon summer and winter, to associate them with thy reverend name and divine power! How easy hast thou made it for us, out of our very senses to rise up toward thee! And yet how much easier is it because thou hast called thyself by such names, and hast represented thyself in such relationships as are most familiar, and are dearest to us—for thou art our Father, and heaven is our home, and the church is a household, and we are all brethren, and we come to thee through the interpretations of thyself which are most familiar and endeared in us, and learn to think of thee in all the daily play of joy and life within the household. And thou hast taught us that thou also art a Lawgiver, and the Supreme Ruler in all the affairs of life. In our contacts with civil affairs we still have something within the range of our understanding from which we glance easily off to thee. And yet there is more of thee than is reflected in any part or in all parts of human experience. Thou art richer than anything on earth can dignify. There is no justice that is a fit emblem of thy justice. There is no love so tender or so enduring that it can measure what love is in God. And we have, besides that knowledge of thee which has come to us through our varied experiences, this blessed thought: that far beyond any conception which we can form, thou art better, nobler, and more joyful to the soul, when it shall behold thee. And when we have gathered together all things which we can, and framed them divinely, and lifted them up before our mind that they may reflect to us something of what thou art, we know as little of thee as they know of the stars far away who look at them through the telescope. They see something of them; but the most remains unsought, unsearched, unknown. None by searching can find thee out, so rich art thou, reaching out so far beyond the interpretation of any faculty or any experience that we have had upon earth. Oh, what joy is in the coming future. Oh, what treasures will there be for the soul when it shall be free to understand, purged from the flesh, opened and enlarged, to be forever with the Lord. Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, for all the hidden treasure that is in thy name.

And now, we beseech of thee, that we may not sin by a narrowing of thee; by a constraint of thy goodness; by likening thee to things which are poor and mean upon the earth, and which were born of man's selfishness or of his weakness. Grant that we may constantly aggrandize our thoughts of God that they may be more

worthy of the majesty of thy goodness, of the glory of thy love, and of its potency in the struggle that is going on in the work of the universe, where thy light is driving further and further away all darkness, and where thy love is driving further and further away all cruelty of suffering.

We beseech of thee that we may rejoice, not in our strength, not in our riches, not in our skill, not in our learning, but in this: that the Lord is ours, and that we are his. We are heirs of Christ. We are joint-heirs. And what hast thou, O Father, that is not thy Son's? O Lord Jesus, what hast thou that is not ours? A sealed will, an unknown legacy, an inheritance undefiled there is, far removed from present knowledge and interpretation; but ours is all that is thine; and thine is all that is God's; and what more can the human mind comprehend, or look upon without comprehension by reason of its greatness?

We adore thee. We rejoice in thee. We sometimes almost fear that we are selfish because we rejoice in thee—in the treasure that we have in thee. Lord, lift upon us to-day the light of thy countenance, and give us the quietude of excessive joy. Give us the tranquillity of those feelings that rise high above all common inspirations, that we may in thee have perfected life even for the moment, if not beyond and more.

Vouchsafe thyself to all. Since thou art food for all, and medicine for all, and the water of life for all; since thou art all in all; since all strength is in thee, and all goodness and life and light are in thee, is there anything that can befall thy people for which thou hast not a remedy and relief? Vouchsafe to every one in thy presence such a consciousness of God present with him that he may be able to bear whatever is brought upon him and imposed upon him. May every one feel that if God be for him nothing and no man can be against him. So may each one be strong, not in his vanity, nor in his pride, nor in his outward strength, but in the feeling that God present is a fortress, a tower, a hiding-place, a refuge, a strong defense, a shield and a buckler. May every one, from day to day, so dwell in the thoughts of God as to be proof against temptation, and trial, and sorrow, and every besetment of this mortal life.

Especially comfort those who seem to themselves to be sitting in the region and shadow of death. Oh, grant that thy blessing this morning may fall upon those who mourn, and sanctify their grief that it may work, not toward death, but toward life. And we pray that those who are in circumstances of perplexity and exquisite care and trouble of heart may find in thee that sympathy which thou didst manifest upon earth. What creature was so low or so degraded, O Jesus, that she could not come to thee? What one ever came to thee in suffering, springing even from the utmost sin, that thou hadst not for him an open face, a kind eye, and the sweet words of comfort and forgiveness? Oh, why should any hold themselves away from such a Redeemer? Vouchsafe to those who have gone wrong and are wrong, that they may not add to all their other transgressions that of doubting the all-forgiving and recovering Saviour,

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant to those who are bearing very heavy burdens, and who require constant thought and endeavor, that they may be patient. May patience be the armor by which they defend themselves against every assault. May they be good soldiers, and stand in their place, and do all that is laid upon them, and still be found willing, and not lie down in weariness. Having done all, may they still stand. Vouchsafe, we pray thee, that wisdom which every one needs. May they ask wisdom of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not.

We pray that thou wilt lead in the right paths all that are yet inexperienced and liable to be misled. Let thy providence surround the young. May all those who have no other teachers find among the people of God fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, that shall lead them into the right way. We pray that thou wilt make the hearts of these people merciful and pitying, that they may be like unto the Lord, and may exert an influence for good, that all evil feelings may cease and be utterly hushed, and that the sweet sound of the singing of birds may be heard—for the time of the singing of birds is come. And we pray that there may be in all such goodness, such cheerfulness, such true faith and trust in God, such hope, and such salvation through Jesus, that all the overflow of their life shall be heavenly and divine.

Bless the strangers that are among us. May they be at home here in the house of their father and our Father, of their brethren and our brethren. Grant that all their thoughts of prayer for those loved ones that they have left behind may go up this morning, and be pleasant to thee. We pray that thou wilt do good to their absent ones. Remember all those who belong to us, and are scattered abroad in thy providence, upon various errands on the sea, on the land, every whither over all the world. We pray that to-day all the blessings of the sanctuary which we are experiencing may go forth in due measure to them. As the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth, so, though we know not how thou canst do it, thy Spirit can make every place a sanctuary, and every heart of those who are beloved by us to be filled with a sense of God present.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless our land. Remember the President of these United States and all who are joined with him in authority. We pray that thou wilt remember all legislatures that are in session in the several States, and all governors, and judges, and magistrates, and all the people that are under the law. Grant that all our rulers may be God-fearing men.

And we beseech of thee, not only that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon this nation, but that thou wilt advance the spirit of Christ in all nations. Bring out of darkness those that dwell in animalism. Bring into the full light of day those that are but partially enlightened. Bring out of all the realm of selfishness and violence all nations that are civilized. Grant that the nations of the earth may begin to love each other, and that the principle of humanity may be recognized, by which all are united together on the face of the earth in amity and co-operative kind.

ness. May thy kingdom come, and thy will be done until the whole earth shall be filled with thy glory.

And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*



PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

OUR Father, wilt thou bless the word spoken. Grant that it may enter into our hearts, and do us good. May it be fruitful in us. May we not take it by word of mouth. May we examine it, and see if it be true. May we sanctify ourselves against malign suffering. May we attempt to make suffering light for other persons, and increase their joy. So may we live in sympathy with them. And at last may we be brought where thou art, to see thee no more through a glass, darkly, but to see thee as thou art, to be like thee, and to be with thee forever.

And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit shall be unceasing praises. *Amen.*

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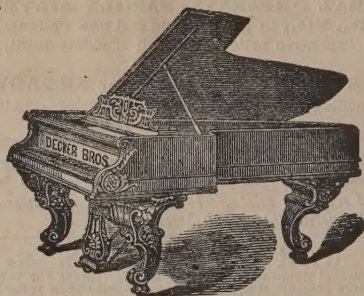
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